

Scripture Text

Ruth 3-4

Context

In the period of the judges, Elimelech, Naomi and their sons leave Bethlehem in the midst of a famine and settle in Moab. There Elimelech dies, and his grown up sons take Moabite woman as their wives. Both sons then pass away, leaving Naomi and her two Moabite daughters-in-law as widows and in a terrible plight. Naomi later decides to return to Bethlehem, and Ruth follows her in faith, trusting in God. In order to survive, Ruth goes to glean in a field belonging to one of Elimelech’s relatives, Boaz. Boaz shows kindness to her, and Ruth’s good character is on display. Yet, both her and Naomi are still vulnerable. This is the context to Ruth 3.

Observation and Meaning

1. What is a kinsman redeemer? (see clues in vs 3.2, 9-13, 4.1-12 as well as in Deut 25)
2. Ruth’s forthrightness in approaching Boaz is understood by her request in vs 9 as well as the ultimate redemption of Naomi in 4.14. How does this help us understand what redemption is all about?
3. In Ch 4 the ‘nearer’ redeemer refuses to take up his rights to redeem Ruth. Why is this and what does this tell us about the cost of redemption?
4. Who are all the characters that get redeemed in the book? How do Ruth’s actions lead to the redemption of both people and nations in the book and in the bible?
5. In what ways in Boaz a type of Christ and how does this illuminate what Christ has done for us?

Big Idea

God is both willing and able to redeem his people and we are therefore to entrust ourselves to him as our redeemer rather than trying to fix our own circumstances.

Connecting to the Bible’s Storyline

The book of Ruth happens at a time when the nation of Israel has no king and everyone seems to be doing what is right in their own eyes. Chaos abounds. By the end of the book, we see how God has redeemed the terrible plight of Naomi and Ruth and provided a king for Israel (David) as well as the ultimate King who would deliver and then reign over His people for all time, Jesus Christ.

Sermon Outline

- I. Acknowledge the need for redemption.
- II. Understand what redemption is.
- III. Seek the one who can redeem you.
- IV. Appreciate what redemption involves.
- V. Remember that God’s redemption is always bigger than just for you.

Application

- In what areas of your life do you have a need for redemption?
- Ruth and Naomi know of the possibility of redemption that is provided for in the law, and hence seek it. Given a proper understanding of redemption from this passage, how should you seek redemption in your life?
- Redemption is always for a bigger purpose than just our personal fulfilment. How do you think God wants to use your redemption for His broader purposes in the world?

Guide for Study Leaders

Use the C.O.M.A. (Context, Observation, Meaning, Application) method to work through the biblical text.

Context

Pay attention to the surrounding verses, paragraphs, chapters, events, etc. to see how this passage fits within the context of this particular book of the Bible.

Note how this passage fits within the larger storyline of the whole Bible, i.e. how God is saving a people through Jesus Christ to live under his rule in his place.

Observation & Meaning

Make careful observations of the biblical text. Notice details such as linking words (eg. “for”, “if”, “therefore”), repetition, dialogue, narrative, OT quotations, etc.

To understand the meaning of the biblical text, we need to discern the author’s purpose or intent: Why is the biblical author writing this?

Helpful questions to ask include:

- Who is writing and to whom?
- What is the situation of the author and of the readers?
- Are we made aware of any problems that need to be addressed?
- Are there any repeated themes, or a single idea that holds everything together?

Application

Apply God’s word to the heart. Move beyond merely addressing circumstances and behaviour by asking good “heart” questions. For example: Why do we do what we do? What do we really desire?

Always connect the gospel to application. For example, what difference does knowing Christ make to our obedience to God?

Ask what the passage teaches us about God, ourselves, salvation in Christ, the church, the world, etc.